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Letter dated 5 September 1994 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Member States of the South Pacific Forum that are States Members of the United Nations, and have the honour to transmit to you the attached copy of the communiqué of the Twenty-Fifth South Pacific Forum, which was held at Brisbane, Australia, from 31 July to 2 August 1994 (see annex).

I wish to draw your attention, in particular, to paragraph 39 of the communiqué, which records the decision taken by the South Pacific Forum to apply at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly for observer status in the Assembly.

I would be grateful for your assistance in distributing the present letter and the communiqué as an official document of the General Assembly under items 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 35, 37, 43, 44, 48, 58, 63, 64, 76, 80, 83, 84, 85, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 99, 100 and 106 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Richard ROWE
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

ANNEX

Communiqué of the Twenty-Fifth South Pacific Forum, held at Brisbane, Australia, from 31 July to 2 August 1994

1. The Twenty-Fifth South Pacific Forum was held at Brisbane from 31 July to 2 August 1994, and was attended by the Heads of State and Government of Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

2. The Forum thanked the people and the Government of Australia for the generous hospitality provided to all delegations to the Forum.

Managing our resources

3. The Forum's considerations focused on the vital topic of "managing our resources", and the leaders issued a separate statement (see appendix) following valuable informal discussions at their retreat. The Forum endorsed the principles contained in the Declaration on Cooperation in the Development of Natural Resources in the South Pacific in the context of the Forum theme. The Forum concentrated on the development of human resources in the region, managing forestry resources and their exploitation, the development of fisheries and their associated industries, land use concerns and their relationship to sustainable development, and the growth of tourism. Additional conclusions reached were as follows.

4. Human resources: The Forum agreed on the critical importance of sustainable development and, in particular, education as a key to effective management of the region's natural resources. The Forum endorsed the Suva Declaration on Sustainable Human Development in the Pacific and underlined the importance of the quality of family life in the context of Pacific island cultures. It noted the importance of the upcoming International Conference on Population and Development and World Summit for Social Development.

5. Forests: The Forum expressed concern at the way in which forests throughout the region and the world were being harvested in a highly destructive manner. It welcomed initiatives being taken at the national level with the aim of achieving sustainable forestry practices, and noted international negotiations on the subject.

6. The Forum warmly welcomed the agreement between the Prime Ministers of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu:

(a) To work towards a common code of conduct governing logging of indigenous forests, to which companies operating in their countries will have to adhere;

(b) On the need to increase urgently monitoring of logging and exports of timber;

(c) That senior officials will meet within the next two months to begin implementing these decisions.

7. Land: The Forum acknowledged the fundamental requirement for the efficient use of land. It recognized that the centrality of indigenous rights and customs and the special relationship of indigenous people to their land and the usage of land varies from country to country. The Forum also agreed on the need to prevent degradation of land.

8. Fisheries: The Forum agreed that multilateral approaches will be strengthened to promote the sustainable exploitation of fish stocks within the region. Towards this end, there is the need to define sustainable catch levels for all fisheries based on the precautionary principle; for countries to work together to enhance the monitoring and policing of fishing; to obtain fair prices for the fisheries resource; and to exploit opportunities for value-added production. The Forum urged all member countries to continue to play an active role in the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

9. Law of the Sea: The Forum welcomed the imminent entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which would strengthen the regional ties that the member nation States of the South Pacific Forum have already formed. The Convention would also provide a stronger basis for continued progress in coordination and cooperation in the conservation, management and exploitation of the living marine resources occurring within the region's exclusive economic and fisheries zones.

10. Private sector: The Forum considered the implications for the region of the outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. It recognized that in the new global trading environment individual businesses needed to be efficient in order to compete effectively and to identify opportunities in international markets.

11. The Forum agreed that the private sector had an important role to play in the reforms now being undertaken in the region and, for this reason, the private sector needed to be strengthened to enable it to lead the next stage of growth. It recognized that if the private sector was to play its role in full, the appropriate critical mass was necessary and, because of differing circumstances, the rate of private sector development would vary from country to country. The Forum directed the Forum secretariat to undertake a greater facilitating role in providing policy advice to member Governments in these areas.

12. Finance and trade ministers: The Forum agreed that a meeting of finance ministers should take place in the near future, with a report being made to the twenty-sixth Forum, and welcomed Australia's offer to fund the first meeting at the Forum secretariat. It also encouraged the participation of representatives from the international financial institutions. The Forum also noted proposals that trade ministers should also meet to consider, among other things, free trade arrangements within the region and means to promote the region's products and services.

Development

13. The Forum stressed the need to adopt a global perspective in regard to the development of economic policies, in particular ensuring the achievement of maximum sustainable economic returns on the region's resources, enhancing development of the private sector, responding to changing global economic conditions, increasing the level of value-added production, and developing regional approaches to international trade.

14. Among the policy initiatives that could be considered by the meeting of finance ministers would be:

(a) Devising appropriate policy responses to maximize opportunities and minimize threats resulting from changes to the global economic environment;

(b) Broadening the economic base in Forum island countries by increasing international competitiveness and productivity;

(c) Improving the balance of payments situation in Forum island countries through the reduction of imports via the adoption of procurement, conservation and efficiency policies;

(d) Enhancing the management of development assistance through clear articulation of Forum island countries development policies and priorities;

(e) Ensuring the collection of reliable, up-to-date, useful and accurate data;

(f) Improving the efficiency of the vital subsistence sector in the Forum island countries.

15. The Forum recognized the particular developmental constraints faced by its smaller members, as well as their limited resources. It agreed that special measures were required to enable them to achieve national development objectives and to manage their resources in a sustainable manner.

16. South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement (SPARTECA): The Forum welcomed the announcement by Australia to contribute $A 900,000 towards the establishment of a foreign investment advisory service office to support further quality investment in the region and to provide assistance to improve product development and market research and overcome non-tariff barriers to trade. It also welcomed the decision of New Zealand to reduce the rule of origin requirements from 50 per cent to 45 per cent for garment imports under SPARTECA.

17. Representative office, Tokyo: The Forum reaffirmed its commitment to the establishment of a South Pacific representative office at Tokyo, with the assistance of the Government of Japan, to promote trade, investment and tourism between Japan and the Forum island countries.

18. Motor spirit octane rating: The Forum considered the considerable economic and environmental benefits offered by adoption of new motor spirit standards in

the region. It recommended that countries in the region adopt a change in the grade of motor spirit from 97 Research Octane Number (RON), 0.84 grams per litre lead, to 92 RON, 0.4 or 0.15 grams per litre lead.

Environmental issues

19. Climate change and sealevel rise: The Forum reaffirmed that global warming and sealevel rise were among the most serious threats to the Pacific region and the survival of some island States. The Forum recognized that existing commitments in the Framework Convention on Climate Change will not meet the ultimate objective of the Convention, and called for early agreement on a process for negotiating one or more protocols to implement and elaborate the Convention so that reductions of greenhouse gas emissions were achieved. It called on Annex 1 Parties to the Framework Convention to meet their obligations and on all non-parties to adhere to the Convention by the end of 1994. Annex 1 countries should ensure that joint implementation complements and does not replace action at home. Priority should be given to activities in support of the Framework Convention's objectives, including both research and also those activities that will assist Forum countries to meet their Convention commitments. The Forum urged enhanced efforts to implement energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources.

20. Coastal zones and land-based pollution: The Forum stressed the importance of sound coastal protection systems and welcomed national, regional and international attention to the preservation of coral reef ecosystems. The Forum supported the development of the emerging global regime for the protection of the oceans against land-based sources of pollution.

21. Biodiversity conservation: The Forum endorsed the establishment of conservation areas under the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme; encouraged Forum members that had not yet done so to ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity as soon as possible; and urged participation to the fullest extent practicable in the first meeting of the contracting parties.

22. The Forum condemned the international trade in endangered species and recommended that Forum members that had not yet done so consider accession to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

23. The Forum welcomed the establishment by the International Whaling Commission of the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary. It also urged the international community to support the continuation of the moratorium on commercial whaling. The Forum noted growing interest in whale watching and the implication of this for developing eco-tourism in the region.

24. The Forum noted with approval the proposal that 1995 be designated the "Year of the Sea Turtle".

25. Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States: The Forum welcomed and endorsed the outcomes of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in

Barbados in April/May 1994. The Forum also stressed the importance of effective implementation of the recommendations in the Conference's Programme of Action for achieving sustainable development in the region. The Forum decided to establish a regional consultative mechanism to coordinate and facilitate implementation of the Barbados Conference's outcomes, as recommended in paragraph 132 of the Programme of Action. Such a mechanism should consist of a support unit utilizing the resources and services of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC), and an advisory committee comprised of senior policy officials. SPREP, in consultation with EPOC and interested parties, should prepare a report on modalities of the mechanism for consideration at the 1994 SPREP annual meeting and, subsequently, by the Forum.

26. Global Environment Facility (GEF): The Forum welcomed the restructuring and replenishment of GEF and its intention to assist in the implementation of the outcome of the Barbados Conference. The Forum called on GEF to provide information and advice to facilitate access to financial and technical resources in support of sustainable development of small island developing States; to support projects that cover more than one of the four areas of GEF; and to support regional approaches to global environmental issues that demonstrate economies of scale and improved coordination for small island developing States.

27. Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS): The Forum supported the continued effective operation and strengthening of AOSIS and commended the extension of its activities as stated in the AOSIS Summit Communiqué issued in Barbados.

28. Hazardous and radioactive wastes: The Forum, in noting the recent decision of the parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal to ban all exports of hazardous wastes from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries to non-OECD countries, welcomed the progress made in the negotiation of a convention to ban the importation into Forum island countries of hazardous wastes and to control their transboundary movement and management within the South Pacific region. The Forum directed officials to make every effort to ensure that the convention would be completed in time for signature at the twenty-sixth South Pacific Forum. The Forum encouraged members to become involved in these negotiations and endorsed the recommendation that SPREP act as the secretariat under the convention.

29. It welcomed the ban on the dumping of radioactive wastes at sea adopted by all but one party to the London Dumping Convention in November 1993. It expressed concern at the possibility of continued dumping of radioactive wastes in the North Pacific by the Russian Federation. It restated the importance of an enhanced international regime to cover possible transboundary damage arising from peaceful nuclear activity. It reiterated its concerns at the risks inherent in shipments of radioactive materials by Japan, and its expectation that such shipments would be made in accordance with the highest international safety and security standards and in a manner which satisfactorily addressed all possible contingencies.

Political and security issues

30. New Caledonia: The Forum noted the further implementation of the Matignon Agreement in the past 12 months. It considered that real economic and social rebalancing was still some distance away and noted that both the French and territorial authorities had acknowledged the need for further efforts in that regard.

31. The Forum affirmed its support for continuing contacts with the French territories as a positive contribution towards the Matignon process. It noted with pleasure in particular that the Kanak Training Fund was now operating successfully with a number of fellowships having been granted. It further noted that the secretariat's relations with France and its territories were on a good footing, with a memorandum of understanding on funding cooperation having recently been signed.

32. Proposed joint declaration of cooperation with the United States of America (FOCUS agreement): The Forum noted and was encouraged by the progress on the framework agreement on cooperation between the Governments of the South Pacific island States and the United States of America. It endorsed in particular a revised text, prepared after consideration of the position of the United States, in the form of a declaration rather than as a treaty, for continuing negotiations with the United States and urged the United States to respond promptly and positively.

33. Joint Commercial Commission (JCC): The Forum agreed that officials would meet later this year at the East West Centre to formulate an agenda and proposals to promote trade and investment between the United States and the Pacific island States. These proposals would be considered by leaders in early 1995 with a view to agreed initiatives being discussed with the United States at the second substantive session of the JCC later in 1995.

34. Law enforcement cooperation: The Forum commended the continued progress in the implementation of the Honiara Declaration on Law Enforcement, in particular the way in which the specialist regional agencies, especially the Pacific Island Law Officers Meeting, in cooperation with the secretariat, had taken initiatives. As the availability of resources remained the main obstacle to much of the law enforcement cooperation, the Forum acknowledged that the ability to move the law enforcement cooperation programme outside the core areas of the Honiara Declaration would be limited, at least for the short term.

35. Nuclear weapons: The Forum welcomed the continuing growth in the membership of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and expressed the desire of its members to see the Treaty extended indefinitely at the 1995 review and extension conference.

36. The Forum welcomed the extension by the United States of its moratorium on nuclear testing, and the continuation by other nuclear-weapons States (except China) of their nuclear-testing moratoriums. The Forum noted that, if France were to cease testing permanently, this would contribute significantly to improving further the relations between France and the Forum countries. Any resumption of testing would be a major set-back to the current positive trend in

relations between France and the region. In this context, the Forum welcomed the commitment of nuclear-weapon States to negotiating a comprehensive test-ban treaty and the progress that was being made in those negotiations, and called for the early conclusion of the treaty. The Forum expressed deep regret over the nuclear test conducted by China on 10 June 1994, and called on China to cease nuclear testing and join the other nuclear-weapon States in a moratorium. Forum countries reiterated their call for the United States, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and France to accede to the protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga) as a demonstration of their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and a ban on testing.

37. The Forum reaffirmed its abhorrence of chemical weapons and reiterated its support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. The Forum urged all members of the international community to sign and ratify the Convention in order to bring it into force as soon as possible.

38. Other nuclear issues: The Forum noted with appreciation the cooperation since the last Forum of Japan in responding to South Pacific Forum concerns regarding plutonium shipments, by provision of information on, and consultation about, its programme of plutonium use. In the context of the continuing discussion in the International Atomic Energy Agency to establish a comprehensive international legal regime on liability, the Forum considered that the region should support the establishment of a credible civil liability regime with adequate compensation levels.

39. Relations with the United Nations: The Forum acknowledged the importance of broadening its exchange of information and consultation with the United Nations Secretariat in New York. To this end, the Forum will apply for observer status at the United Nations General Assembly, with the observer status serviced by cooperation between the Secretariat and the South Pacific countries group of Forum missions in New York through the Forum Chairman. Conscious of the resource implications of this proposal on both the Secretariat and the Forum members' missions in New York, the Forum will focus on United Nations business of direct and immediate relevance to the Forum positions, and involve, where appropriate, a range of regional agencies which could contribute to United Nations discussions on particular technical issues.

Forum country initiatives

40. United Nations Security Council: The Forum declared its support for the candidacy of Australia for the Security Council for a two-year term.

41. Australia/Pacific 2000: The Forum noted the benefits that could be derived for the whole region from the Olympic games, which are to be hosted by Sydney, Australia, in the year 2000, and welcomed the decision by Australia to provide $A 1 million per year for an Australia/Pacific 2000 programme to extend the benefits of the Sydney 2000 Olympic games to Pacific island countries.

Institutional matters

42. Forum review: The Forum endorsed the report of the Ministerial Working Group in the review of the Forum's processes and procedures and expressed its appreciation to the Ministers for the report. The Forum agreed that:

(a) It should continue to meet annually at head of Government level;

(b) The Forum agenda should be sharper and more focused, addressing three or four substantive issues requiring head of Government consideration;

(c) The Forum Chairman should play a more active role in managing Forum meetings and in articulating agreed Forum policy positions between meetings on issues of major importance to the Forum, in close consultation with the Secretary-General and in accordance with guidelines proposed;

(d) The Secretary-General should be involved more actively in pursuing Forum objectives in the United Nations, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group of countries and the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

43. Pacific Prize: The Forum confirmed the establishment of the Pacific Prize and the guidelines for selection that have been developed.

44. Reappointment of the Secretary-General: The Forum announced the reappointment of the Hon. Ieremia T. Tabai as Secretary-General of the Forum for a further term of three years.

Reports of regional organizations

45. The Forum received with appreciation and adopted, where appropriate, the annual reports of:

(a) The Director of the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency;

(b) The Director of the Pacific Islands Development Programme;

(c) The Director of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission;

(d) The Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific;

(e) The Secretary-General of the Forum secretariat;

(f) The Director of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme;

(g) The Director of the Tourism Council for the South Pacific.

Date and venue of the next meeting

46. The Forum reaffirmed its appreciation and acceptance of the kind offer of Papua New Guinea to host the twenty-sixth South Pacific Forum. The date for the Forum will be finalized by Papua New Guinea in consultation with the secretariat. The Forum also warmly accepted the offer by the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Cook Islands to host the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth South Pacific Forum respectively.

Appendix

Twenty-Fifth South Pacific Forum: statement from the leaders' retreat dated 1 August 1994

We have had a very valuable discussion on important resource management issues facing the Forum region. We are all agreed on the urgent need to make better use of the region's resources.

We have decided to take action in a number of areas as follows:

Fisheries

The region's fisheries are an internationally significant resource from which the countries of the region should receive a fair return. We supported the development of a multilateral approach to negotiating access to fisheries resources in our exclusive economic zones. We agreed that no member should be worse off under future multilateral arrangements. The Forum will pursue this issue with distant water fishing nations that do not have multilateral agreements.

We have asked that Forum countries take this up with distant water fishing nations at their meeting in December.

We agreed on the need to strengthen the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency capacity so that it can ensure more effective national control and management of the region's fisheries.

We also noted the importance for the future of the fishing industry in the region of fish farming and aquaculture and the replenishment of fish stocks.

Airlines

There was general agreement on the need to deal with airline losses. The leaders agreed to examine the options for a rationalization of air services among Forum island countries, perhaps on a subregional basis.

We agreed that, given the problems of distance and size in the Pacific, any reform of airline structures should take into account the need to ensure adequate services throughout the region. It would also need to look at such factors as the frequency and cost of operations, fares and safety.

A meeting of operators and civil aviation authorities will be convened to prepare a proposal for consideration by heads of Government.

Forestry

Leaders were strongly concerned about the exploitation of tropical forests in the region and welcomed recent initiatives by Vanuatu and Solomon Islands to halt the spread of unsustainable logging practices, including the introduction

of independent monitoring systems. We agreed that the people of the region needed to receive a much higher return from logging operations.

The Forum endorsed the undertaking of leaders of the Melanesian Spearhead Group to examine uniform legislation, procedures and practices in forest resources.

Tourism

Tourism provides valuable employment opportunities. We recognized the excellent potential for tourism development in our region, provided its unique environmental features were preserved. In this regard, we noted the particular need to protect the region's fragile coastal zones.